

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

her and familiarly as friend with friend, and kissed her with ^{Ct} the mysterious kiss that infused into her spirit the sweetness of ineffable delight."¹ And, at the very beginning of these visions and revelations, the Lord delivered to her the simple doctrine which became the basis of her whole conception of God and man : " Knowest thou, O daughter, who thou art and who am I ? Thou art she who art not, and I am He who am. If thou hast this knowledge in thy soul, the enemy will never be able to deceive thee, and thou wilt escape from all his snares; never wilt thou consent to anything against My commandments, and every grace, every truth, every clearness, thou wilt acquire without difficulty." "The soul," said Catherine, in illustration of this, " that already sees her own nothingness and knows that all her good is in her Creator, entirely abandons herself with all her powers and all creatures, and immerses herself utterly in her Creator, in such wise that she directs all her operations primarily and entirely towards Him; nor would she in any wise go out of Him, in whom she perceives she has found every good and all perfection of felicity ; and from the vision of love, which daily increases in her, she is in a manner so transformed into God that she cannot think, nor understand, nor love, nor remember aught save God, and what concerns God. She sees not other creatures or herself, save only in God, neither does she remember herself or them, save simply in God ; even as one who dives down into the sea, and is swimming under its waters, neither sees nor touches aught save the waters of the sea and the things that are in those waters ; he sees nothing outside those waters, touches nothing, feels nothing. If the likeness of those things that are without reflect themselves in the water, he can, indeed, see them ; but only in the water and as they are in the water ; not otherwise. And this is the ordered and right love of self and of all creatures, in which we cannot go wrong, because of necessity it is governed by divine rule, neither by it is anything desired outside God, because it is ever exercised in God and is ever in Him."

¹ Tantucci, pp. 36, 45.